

ACTION SCT-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	WHA-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	OIGO-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00
	FRB-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	JUSE-00	LAB-01	VCE-00
	AC-00	NSAE-00	TFBI-00	PER-00	ACE-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	TEST-00	ASDS-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00
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P 031302Z DEC 03

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3549

INFO WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS PRIORITY

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 003958

S/CT FOR REAP; WHA/BSC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PTER, AR

SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: 2003 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: STATE 301352

1. The following responses are keyed to questions contained in Para 2 of reftel.

Question A: The Government of Argentina (GOA) has continued to express strong support for the global war on terrorism. The GOA has worked closely and cooperatively within the United Nations to ensure full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1373. It has cooperated fully with efforts to block terrorist financial assets, responding quickly and effectively to ensure that any assets of terrorist groups identified by the United States Government and by the UN, if discovered in Argentine financial institutions, will be blocked. On the diplomatic front, Argentina has worked within existing regional and international organizations to elicit strong official declarations condemning terrorism and pledging those organizations to combat terrorism on a global basis. Argentina maintains a leadership role in the OAS Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE), the organization that was formed in response to an Argentine initiative.

Question B: There were no terrorist acts committed in Argentina in 2003. However, the trial of alleged accomplices in the 1994 terrorist attack on the Jewish Community Center

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(AMIA) which began in September 2001, continued through 2003 and appears to be coming to a close. The Argentine judge in charge of the investigation issued indictments against twelve Iranian officials, including diplomats stationed in Buenos Aires at the time of the bombing, and one Lebanese national believed to be associated with Hezbollah. In addition, the GOA has moved to declassify some information gathered during the investigation to allow its use in court. Investigation of the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy also continued in 2003.

Question C: The U.S. made no terrorism related extradition requests to Argentina in 2003. Nor did Argentina receive such requests from other countries. The GOA did request of the United Kingdom the extradition of the former Iranian ambassador to Argentina, one of the Iranian officials indicted by the judge investigating the AMIA attack. The request was denied by the HMG on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

Question D: Discussion has continued for many years in Argentina on possible changes to its legal code to facilitate investigation and prosecution of terrorist crimes. Since 1994 there has been an active debate within the Executive and the Legislative branches of government over establishing a comprehensive terrorism law, that would allow the use of paid informants, plea bargaining and undercover agents. However, past abuses of police power during the military regime continue to color the opinion of much of the population on such issues. The absence of these judicial powers reflects a heightened sensitivity on civil liberties issues, but also impedes investigation and prosecution of suspected terrorists. The simple definition of what constitutes a terrorist and terrorist acts has also been complicated by the country's history. Since September 11, 2001, there has been little progress towards the passage of new comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation. Relevant GOA authorities were provided with copies of the U.S. Patriot Act passed into law in the U.S. in 2001, following the September 11 attacks.

Question E: Having been the victim of major international terrorist attacks in 1992 and 1994, the GOA has strongly and consistently deplored terrorist acts whenever they occur and frequently makes public statements of its position. During 2003, ex-President Duhalde and his successor, Nestor Kirchner, have made frequent public statements condemning terrorist acts as they occurred throughout the world in 2003. The GOA has also publicly reiterated its support for the global war against terrorism.

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Question F: Argentina has cooperated closely throughout 2003 in all significant international counter-terrorism efforts within the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS). In the region, Argentina was instrumental in promoting improved coordination with Mercosur partners (Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia and Chile) in strengthening security and searching for terrorist support networks in the Tri-Border Area. Ministry of Interior officials have maintained close contact on terrorism issues with their counterparts in neighboring countries, including improved sharing of intelligence information. Broader consultations among Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay, including officials of other government institutions, took place during 2003 to address the regional threat of terrorism, with a special focus on the Tri-Border Area. The

second installment of a regional meeting on the Tri-Border Area took place in Brasilia in May 2003, and was attended by senior USG officials with responsibility for counter-terrorism.

Question G: Argentina does not in any way provide support for international terrorism, terrorists, or terrorist groups.

Question H: Argentina made no public statements in support of a country or countries that support terrorism on terrorism-related issues.

Question I: In 2003 the GOA continued to take concrete and positive steps to improve coordination within its own government structure on the issue of counter-terrorism. To this end, the Foreign Ministry office responsible for coordinating government action and policy on international counter-terrorism issues has continued its efforts to improve coordination among various institutions of the GOA while beginning to define specific goals, such as the eventual participation of Argentina in the U.S. Container Security Initiative (CSI) program. The office's other functions include serving as the GOA's primary point of contact for OAS CICTE issues and coordinating the GOA's participation on terrorism issues in other international organizations.

Question J: Since the September 11 attacks, the USG has maintained close and frequent contact with the GOA on issues of counter-terrorism, both through bilateral channels and through the OAS Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE). The USG and GOA have maintained especially frequent contact on issues of blocking the assets of terrorists and terrorist organizations and the sensitive Tri-Border area.

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The GOA, including the Ministry of Economy, the Foreign Ministry and the Central Bank, as well as the relevant local banking associations, have been extremely cooperative in responding to requests related to blocking terrorist financial assets. Though no leads have been found on the assets issue, the GOA continually expressed its willingness to freeze assets in accordance with USG and UN requests and requirements. The USG continues to work closely with the GOA in the Tri-Border Area. The USG has also made several requests to GOA authorities for investigative assistance on post-September 11 leads regarding suspected travel by international terrorists to Argentina. The GOA has been extremely helpful on all such requests.

Questions K/L: Beyond the post-September 11 issues mentioned in Question J above, there have been no other cases of USG requests to the GOA in the previous five years for assistance in the investigation or prosecution of an act of international terrorism against U.S. citizens or interests. There has been no specific information sought from Argentina in 2003 for the prosecution of international terrorism cases.

However, GOA follow-through in the pursuit of investigative leads on terrorism matters has been outstanding. This cooperation predates the September 11, 2001 attacks and has continued to improve since then.

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